Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. - 8. (canceled)

9. (currently amended) [The system of claim 1] A broadband communication system of the type utilizing xDSL packet-based technologies, the system comprising:

an upstream xDSL modem; and

a twisted pair connected to the upstream xDSL modem;

a plurality of taps defined along the twisted pair;

a plurality of downstream xDSL modems, each downstream xDSL modem being in communication with a corresponding tap of the plurality of taps, the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems providing packet-based point-to-multipoint communication between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems; and

wherein the plurality of downstream xDSL modems are operative to transmit to the upstream xDSL modem in a contention-based protocol.

10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) [The system of claim 1] A broadband communication system of the type utilizing xDSL packet-based technologies, the system comprising:

an upstream xDSL modem;

a twisted pair connected to the upstream xDSL modem;

a plurality of taps defined along the twisted pair;

a plurality of downstream xDSL modems, each downstream xDSL modem being in communication with a corresponding tap of the plurality of taps, the upstream xDSL modem

and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems providing packet-based point-to-multipoint communication between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems; and

wherein the upstream xDSL modem is operative to transmit to the plurality of downstream xDSL modems in a broadcast-based protocol.

12. - 18. (canceled)

19. (currently amended) [The method of claim 15] further comprising:

a broadband communication method for xDSL packet-based applications, the method comprising:

broadcasting from a point, over a twisted pair, with an upstream xDSL modem;

receiving at a plurality of points with a plurality of downstream xDSL modems, each downstream xDSL modem being in communication with a corresponding tap of a plurality of taps defined along the twisted pair, the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems providing packet-based point-to-multipoint communication between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems; and

transmitting from the plurality of downstream xDSL modems to the upstream xDSL modem in a contention-based protocol.

21. (currently amended) [The method of claim 15] A broadband communication method for xDSL packet-based applications, the method comprising:

broadcasting from a point, over a twisted pair, with an upstream xDSL modem;

receiving at a plurality of points with a plurality of downstream xDSL modems, each downstream xDSL modem being in communication with a corresponding tap of a plurality of taps defined along the twisted pair, the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems providing packet-based point-to-multipoint communication between the upstream xDSL modem and the plurality of downstream xDSL modems; and

wherein broadcasting further comprises:

transmitting from the upstream xDSL modem to the plurality of downstream xDSL modems in a broadcast-based protocol.